

*Silvae* seems to have waned, and the poems suffered the same fate as the other ancient occasional poems did, disappearing for all intents and purposes.<sup>78</sup>

The transmission of the *Silvae* in the late Middle Ages stems from two manuscripts. The first is a ninth-century German copy of the *Genethliacon Lucani* (2.7) which is, somewhat ironically, our oldest extant Statius manuscript (Firenze, BML, plut. 29.32). The text, which is not identified in the manuscript (the eighteenth-century library catalog labels the work as being by Lucan), is situated among a number of agrarian texts and seems neither to have been copied nor to have had any influence before it was examined by Politian in the late fifteenth century.<sup>79</sup> The second was a now-lost manuscript, possibly of insular origin,<sup>80</sup> containing Silius Italicus, the *Silvae*, and Manilius' *Astronomica*. This is probably the same manuscript that is listed in a ninth-century catalog of the Stiftsbibliothek in Reichenau as "Item Ovidii Metamorphoseon, Silii et Statii, Volumen I."<sup>81</sup>

This latter manuscript was discovered by Poggio Bracciolini in an unspecified location near Constance,<sup>82</sup> where he was acting as Papal secretary during 1417–18. He had a copy of it made, likely by a local scribe.<sup>83</sup> Poggio was not pleased with the transcription and later made his famous pronouncement, "Is qui libros transcribit ignorantissimus omnium viventium fuit—divinare oportet, non legere,"<sup>84</sup> a phrase that has resulted in a lot of spilled ink, both as regards the manuscript that Poggio saw and as regards the authority of the copy. This notwithstanding, the readings of Poggio's copy and the Florentine manuscript of 2.7 are very close.

Poggio made what seem to be some corrections and emendations to his copy of the manuscript and then sent this volume to Franciscus Barbarus for further emendation and requested him to send the volume on to Niccolò Niccoli. Niccolò held on to the manuscript at least until the 1430s, possibly in order to complete his own commentary,<sup>85</sup> despite Poggio's requests for the return of the volume.<sup>86</sup> The diffusion of the poems was, thus, slower than that of the other newly discovered texts, such as the works of Tacitus.<sup>87</sup> This is, at least, the conclusion that we

(Klotz 1908.179 *ad loc.*). [A now-lost fifth-century epitaph from a Christian cemetery in Ras el Oued quotes Silv. 3.3.128–30 \(CLE 1787.2–4; CIL VIII suppl. P. III, p. 1943 nr. 20588, ll. 2–4\), but this was unknown until recently. See S. Gsell, "Note sur les fouilles récentes de Tipasa \(Algérie\)," \*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres\* 20 \(1892\): 242–50 \[250\]; and \*id.\*, "Satafis \(Périgotville\) et Thamalla \(Toqueville\)," \*Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome\*, 15 \(1895\): 32–70 \[57\]. Gsell's 1892 report contained silent reconstructions, unbeknownst to contemporaries, such as F. Skutsch, "Zu Statius \*Silvae\* III 3.130," \*WS\* 17 \(1896\): 160 \(= \*Kleine Schriften\*, Leipzig, 1914: 196\).](#)

<sup>78</sup> The title *Sillabarum* does occur once in conjunction with Statius, in an accessus to the *Thebaid* in Vaticano, Barb. lat. 74, but the citation is ultimately derived from Priscian, *Inst.* 13.15 (*GLK* 3.10.21). See de Angelis 1984.181–84.

<sup>79</sup> The text is written without line-breaks, although it does preserve some initials, suggesting that it was copied from a version that did have them.

<sup>80</sup> The scribe often writes *r* for *s* and *y* and occasionally writes *is* for *u*.

<sup>81</sup> The catalog is in Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, cod. Don. 191 (from Donaueschingen).

<sup>82</sup> On the basis of Poggio's discoveries at Sankt Gallen, it was often believed that the Statius manuscript was also found there, even by Politian. See Clark 1921.20–30 and Blass 1875.

<sup>83</sup> This copy, less Silius, is now Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, ms. 3678.

<sup>84</sup> See Courtney 1990.IX.

<sup>85</sup> Now Vaticano, Vat. lat. 6835; the poem of his commentary is also transmitted in Vaticano, Vat. lat. 6526. See Mercati 1925.136–38. Niccolò spent an unusually long time working on this commentary; for comparison, he published his edition of Valerius Flaccus in 1429, only thirteen years after Poggio discovered the manuscript.

<sup>86</sup> See H. Harth, ed., *Lettere* (Firenze, 1984), 1.102.

<sup>87</sup> See Reeve 1977.202–25 and Reeve 1983.387–89. On the quick diffusion of Tacitus, *Historiae* and *Annales* 11–16, see R.J. Tarrant, "Tacitus," in Reynolds 1983.407–409.